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habitable "house kiop," a house built for the use of any visiting Government official on patrol through the island. I moved into it immediately and it was finished after I was in. The house was comfortable, made of wood, with a thatched roof, and contained two rooms and a large porch. One room served as a storeroom and the other as my sleeping-room. I worked and ate on the porch. Several small outhouses, for cooking, for the sleeping quarters of my servants, etc., completed the establishment. From Rabaul, the capital of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, I had brought with me two native servants, an attractive young couple, whose home was in another linguistic district in New Ireland, and who had been working for an Australian Government official in Rabaul. They were therefore trained for my domestic needs and in addition spoke pidgin English. The boy was cook and "shoot boy," bringing down a bird with my gun whenever I wanted one for a meal. His wife worked about the house, did my laundry, and such personal service as cutting my hair. They were well liked in the village, and it is helpful to the anthropologist to have popular servants.

The first few days, while I was getting settled and unpacking equipment, we were almost continuously surrounded by a group of curious and smiling natives. Some of these spoke pidgin English and I was able to converse with them. I explained my purpose in coming to their village, telling them that where I came from (they had never heard of America, and so I drew a map on the sand) "my people" knew nothing about them, and that I had been sent to learn about their customs and mode of life. I showed them anthropological books illustrated with pictures of other

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primitive peoples, and further, to impress them, I added that my prestige (a familiar concept to natives) when I returned home would depend to a great degree on how much I knew about their customs and how accurate was my information. This was something they could understand and was, moreover, essentially the truth. They, in turn, wanted to know about "my people." So I told them about my mother, father, sisters, brother, and other relatives. Kinship here is important, and as I was asking about their relatives, it was therefore understood that they could ask about mine, or any other thing in which they were interested.

I was particularly fortunate in that the chief or "luluai" of the village was a very intelligent and fine person. His wife, also intelligent and an attractive personality, announced that she was my sister, and it followed naturally that her mother became my mother. Their house was opposite mine, and from the beginning a warm friendship sprang up. The chief, his family, and most of the Lesu people developed an attitude of responsibility for my welfare. They were rather flattered at my having come to study them instead of a neighbouring group. Word of my visit spread rapidly throughout the island, and natives from distant parts came to see so strange a phenomenon as a white woman living alone in a native village. After a while I had invitations from chiefs in other villages to visit their places. Besides this attitude of responsibility for my welfare, the natives also took the position of instructors. It was they who were teaching me the language, the magical spells, the myths and folk-tales, etc., and they took their job seriously. One day, after several months in Lesu, I made a rather amusing mistake while conversing in the native language. The verbal

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slip was repeated all around the village as a good joke, and I thought it was funny too. But not so an old man who had been my principal instructor in the language. Much annoyed, he came to see me. He asked if I didn't realize that everyone knew he was my teacher, and that when I made a mistake it reflected on him? I was properly humble and said meekly that I would try and do better next time.

My field technique consisted of several procedures. I worked with the most intelligent natives, men and women, as informants. We had long sessions at my house, when I secured magic and other ethnological data privately with one or two individuals at a time. Then, too, I attended every ceremony that took place during my stay and had long discussions about the rite after it occurred. I never went uninvited, but I was invited to everything. This was true also for purely masculine occasions such as the men's feasts. To these a couple of the important old men would escort me. I would sit quietly to one side, munching a banana or taro, and taking notes. My notebook and pencil accompanied me everywhere, and the natives took it quite for granted that I should write everything down. I explained that my memory was not good enough to remember everything they told me or that I saw, and so I wrote it down. This they understood, and some of them said that if they had writing, they would remember much better too.

Other times I would go to the gardens with the women, sit with them as they prepared the food, or join them as they gossiped and took their ease after a day's work. In the casual everyday life I was much more with the women than with the men. I felt quite free at all times to wander through the village, visiting my friends, and they in turn

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would come and see me. At night I often listened to them telling folk-tales. Since most of the life was carried on outdoors I could stand on my doorstep and both see and hear the life of the hamlet about me. Here was a noisy quarrel going on, there some children playing, and in the distance, returning from the bush, some men with a wild pig they had just captured. Information was thus obtained through all these methods: regular work with informants in the privacy of my home, observation of all events in the community life, and participation, to some degree, in the casual everyday life of the natives.

I used stick tobacco as my currency in trading with the natives. Everyone—men, women, and children—smoked. They had their own native-grown tobacco, but they much preferred my Virginia twist. All my economic transactions were carried on according to native custom. I had bought with me gifts—knives, spades, loin-cloths, tinsel trimming, jews' harps, etc.—and I was on terms of gift exchange with many of the natives; the code of reciprocity was followed.

My relationship with the natives was not built up in a day. The first month I worked slowly and carefully, developing friendships and winning their confidence. I tried to be perfectly consistent in my behaviour towards them and always gave a very simple reason for everything I did. In a few months I felt secure in their friendship and liking, and I could then venture to get the more intimate details of their life.

To learn the language, which is a hitherto unrecorded Melanesian dialect with apparently Papuan elements, was the most difficult part of the work for me. I recorded texts and then, with the aid of an interpreter, analysed them. I collected a vocabulary as I went along. I listened to native

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stones, and when these are hot they are leveled and the food put between them. Leaves and sand are then put over it, and the food remains there until it is baked. Men are working in groups of two or three, but not very continuously, wrapping a fish or a pig in leaves preparatory to baking, or bringing in leaves from the bush to wrap around the food. Their work in this connection is never as steady as the women's work. A man may tend to the liga and then loll around for a half hour or more, until there is something else to do. Frequently the men will take care of the babies, while the mothers scrape the taro. The main work of cooking falls upon the women; although the men do assist, this does not break into the sexual division of labor.

When the women have finished preparing the taro (for a big feast this takes at least three or four hours), and after it has been placed in the liga, the ground on which they have been working is cleaned and they take their ease. Until now they have been working seriously and without stopping, except perhaps to nurse a baby. There has been no talking except for the necessary remarks about the taro. Now they sit in the same place smoking their pipes and chatting. Gossip is exchanged, jokes are told and followed with appreciative laughter, and here and there a woman is engaged in the pastime of searching for lice in a friend's or relative's hair. If a woman of the village has just become pregnant, there will be playful fighting between the women of the opposite moieties. This part of the pregnancy rites occurs whenever there is a group of women present. The men in the meantime are a short distance away, on the beach, in the compound in front of the men's house or some other house, in groups of two or three, smoking and chatting but not in any large group. This period—while the food is baking in the liga—is an easy, convivial, feminine communal occasion, as is the eating which follows for the men.

Description of Feast

Three or four hours later, when the food has been baked, the men and boys carry it in their hands into the cemetery. For the men the cemetery serves as a banqueting hall and most of the men's ritual feasts are held there.[11] Women are never permitted in the cemetery for a feast, or at any other time, except at a burial, and then they leave immediately after the interment.[12]

[11] The economic feasts in payment to workers are not always held in the cemetery, and the malanggon ones are held in a special structure erected for them. The connection of eating in the cemetery with mortuary beliefs must be considered at another time.

[12] However, I was invited to all the feasts, and the invitations were always accepted.